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[p.207 b] Sierra Tarascans
La Cañada

755 a recently killed coyote have been placed just before the water reaches the boiling point.

Scorpion stings are treated by giving the
752 patient immediately a drink made by boiling
755 *casaguate* with salt. Another treatment is to give powder produced by rubbing two stones together. The powder is dissolved in water. The wound is also rubbed with lemon juice.

Rabies is treated by giving water in which
[824] has been macerated a ball of the male ash tree (male and female trees are distinguished).

Sickly children are treated by bathing them
755 with turtle blood. After a sufficient number of fresh water turtles are collected, they are made to put out the head by putting coals on the shell. The neck is then severed with a single blow of a machete, and the turtle is suspended over the head of the child (who is standing naked) so the blood streams down from head to foot.

DEATH

Death is regarded as a normal event in
761 Cherán and mourning is restrained and, in the main, private. Somewhat more grief is shown when the deceased is a child or a person still vigorous. An old person, who has begun to
[888] lose some of his vigor, is often spoken of as only half alive. Similarly, very small children are often regarded as not fully alive. For persons already regarded as not fully members of the community of the living, no great emotional response to death may be expected.

Ideas about death and afterlife are essentially
775 Catholic. Small children who die are believed to go directly to heaven, while adults must pass some time in purgatory. The dead are not particularly feared, nor is it believed that they ordinarily return. However, if a person dreams frequently of a dead relative it is believed that the deceased individual has returned for a member of his family and that one of the household will certainly die. There is no remedy for such a situation.

Because of the different beliefs regarding the
764 afterlife of children and adults, there are some differences in funerals for the two age groups.

In the case of a child, the godfather of baptism provides the burial dress, which is placed on the body by the godmother or the mother, or by the sisters of the mother. The body is not

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764 washed. If the deceased is a girl, the dress is a long gown of white with a sort of long cape of blue. The corpse of a boy is dressed in the same way except the inner garment is yellow and the cape is green. In both cases a crown of cardboard, covered with silver paper and decorated with paper flowers, is placed on the head.

The body is placed on a table. Arches of flexible wood, wrapped in paper and decorated with paper flowers, are placed over the body.

A bunch of flowers with a candle in the middle is placed in the hands of the corpse. Preparation of the flowers is done by girls related to the deceased. The body is watched during the night and candles are burned. A "prayer," uandátsikuritíč (*rezador*), is asked to come and pray. He is paid from $0.75 to $1.50 for his service.

In the morning all the relatives assemble and are fed. The food is provided by the parents, but the relatives of the mother aid in its preparation. Opinion is divided regarding aid given the parents. Some say that persons attending the death watch during the night bring *aguardiente* and that all those visiting the house make a present of a few centavos to aid in the expenses. Others denied this custom and claimed the parents must stand all the expense even though they have to sell some property. However, everyone who visits the house brings a candle, which is burned for the deceased.

The body is usually taken to the graveyard sometime during the afternoon. Formerly the body of a child was often accompanied by musicians, but this practice seems to have entirely disappeared, or nearly so. Each family has a plot or section in the graveyard and three or four male relatives prepare the grave in advance of the burial. Four girls, who are relatives of the deceased, carry the body to the graveyard on the table on which it has rested. Often only a few of the closer relatives will go to the graveyard, but the godparents are always present.

At the graveyard the body is removed from the table and placed in a wooden box or coffin. This is lowered into the grave without ceremony by relatives who also fill the grave with earth. Sometimes some of the women will sprinkle a

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764 handful of earth on the coffin in the form of the cross before the grave is filled. The arches decorating the table are placed over the grave. There are no prayers or other ceremonies and the party leaves immediately after the grave is filled.

The body of an adult is watched through the night with candles; this night watch is attended by many more people than in the case of an infant and atole made of rice and brown sugar is served at midnight. The corpse is dressed in black clothing of the type worn in life. Nothing is placed on the head. A candle is placed in the hand of the corpse but no flowers. The clothing is prepared by the nearest relatives, the godparents taking no part in the funeral of a person over about 14 years of age.

In the morning the visitors and mourners are served beans and tortillas. At noon it is obligatory to serve broth, čurípo, and white tamales, kurúndas (although these are regarded as injurious to the digestion). The food is all prepared by relatives of the wife. The body is taken to the graveyard in a wooden coffin and is carried by four male relatives. A few people take the body first to the church, but generally it is taken directly to the graveyard. In any case, there are never any prayers at the graveyard. As in the case of a child, all the prayers are in the house, usually with the aid [767] of a professional "prayer" or *rezador*. The priest is never asked to officiate, although he may have been summoned while the person was dying. The body is buried in the family plot (but a woman is buried in the plot of her husband's family). In the case of both adults and children a small stoppered *olla* of water is placed at the head of the corpse but outside the coffin. There are no flowers, but each mourner carries a candle.

One evident contradiction between theory and 183 practice was observed. Numerous informants 764 insisted that there was never any music for funerals of adults at any time. In actual fact, several funerals were observed in which music played in the house almost the entire day of the funeral.

765 In some cases, the interment ends all mourn- 767 ing. In others, the family hires a *rezador* to come to the house every afternoon for 9 days to pray. The members of the family join in

114 In the last area, information was also secured from residents of Cuanajo and Pucuaro, but these villages were not visited.

115 Many informants were used, but those most employed in Cherán were Pedro Chávez and Agustín Rangel; in Paracho, Maximino Estrada, master carpenter; and in Angahuan, the brothers José and Miguel Bravo.

104 Tarascan words are written in the alphabet approved by the Consejo de Lenguas Indígenas. Unless otherwise indicated, Tarascan words are from Paracho or Cherán (the two are only 6 miles apart, and dialect differences are slight). Spanish words are italicized, but if the word has a special regional meaning not found in standard dictionaries, it is placed in quotations and the meaning is explained the first time the word is used. Names of towns are in the local Spanish spelling.

THE TARASCAN TOWN

361 on the Lake and some of the Sierra villages, such as Urapicho, the plan is irregular and the streets have steps.

If the town is of any size, it usually is divided into from two to four districts known as *cuarteles*, or *barrios*. The town tends to center on a plaza, where usually is to be found a municipal building, the school, and the church, although the latter may not be directly upon the plaza. In most
● [764] cases, a fenced cemetery exists before the church, but in some towns it has been replaced by a new cemetery on the outskirts. A stone cross still stands in the center of the cemetery in most towns.

342 Two clearly defined types of construction exist in the Tarascan area: wood, and a combination of adobe bricks and stone masonry laid in adobe mortar. In the region of the Sierra, the majority of houses are of wood with shake roofs. Adobe-and-masonry construction with tile roofs predominates in the region around Lake Pátzcuaro, the district of Zacápu, the region known as La Cañada, and the district of Zamora. The division, however, is not absolute. Adobe-and-masonry structures, sometimes with tile roofs, sometimes with shake roofs, are found in most of the towns of the Sierra, especially in the larger settlements and